



Research, Education, and Economics (REE)

National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board

Executive Committee (EXECOM) Conference Call – May 7, Meeting Minutes

NAREEE Committee Members Present: Dr. Kenrett Jefferson-Moore (Chair), Dr. Sreekala Bajwa, Dr. V.M. “Bala” Balasubramaniam, Ms. Donnell Brown, Mr. Richard De Los Santos, Dr. Mario Ferruzzi, Dr. Ellen Harris, Ms. Vanessa Garcia Polanco, Mr. Edwin Kitzes, Dr. Jane Kolodinsky, Dr. William Lytle, Dr. Natahsa Mast, Dr. Jane Schuchardt, Ms. Tambra Stevenson - 14

Members Absent: – Dr. Mark Lawrence - 1

NAREEE Board Staff Present: Ms. Kate Lewis, NAREEE Board Executive Director/Designated Federal Officer (DFO) and Ms. Michele Simmons, Program Specialist

Guest: Dr. Jim McFerson, Chair, National Genetics Resources Advisory Council (NGRAC)

I. Welcome from Kate Lewis, Roll Call, and Quorum Check. Quorum was met.

Ms. Simmons asked if there were any revisions to the April minutes. There were no comments or revisions. She asked for a motion to approve the minutes. All were in favor. Ms. Simmons will have the web team post the April minutes and agenda on the NAREEE website.

II. NGRAC Work Product Presentation, Dr. McFerson, NGRAC Chair

- Formulates recommendations on the acquisition, maintenance, characterization, documentation, and distribution of genetic resources.
- Advises the ARS National Genetic Resources Program on innovative approaches to genetic resources management.
- FY24 Work Products
 - Crop Genetic Vulnerability (Final Draft -- Council-approved)
 - Effective Deployment of Genetic Resources (under development)
 - Tribal Engagement in Genetic Resources (under development)

Crop Genetic Vulnerability Report - Towards a More Resilient US Agriculture: Strengthening the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS)



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**NGRAC is requesting NAREEE Board review and approval of this report
Background**

- April 2016 NGRAC Working Group
- Recommend approaches to streamline and facilitate the update and enhancement of baseline crop vulnerability data for the NPGS
- Aggregate information on crop genetic vulnerability from NPGS Crop Germplasm Committees
- April 2024 Report and recommendations finalized and approved

**Crop Genetic Vulnerability Recommendations
Towards a More Resilient US Agriculture: Strengthening the National Plant
Germplasm System**

- Implement the 2023 NPGS Strategic Plan.
- Empower curators to develop crop-specific Crop Vulnerability Statements for every collection.
- Provide the necessary resources for crop-specific curators to develop and implement prioritized action plans.
- Require action plans balance costs/resources and optimize collection composition.
- Empower curators and CGCs to develop regular updates on societal impact.
- Improve engagement with stakeholders, tribal communities, international partners and the general public.
- Recruit and retain curators trained in genetics, genomics, and breeding.
- Enhance training opportunities for NPGS personnel, especially crop-specific curators.
- Improve access to well-curated genomic, genetic and breeding databases.

DFO Lewis thanked Dr. McFerson for presenting his PowerPoint and for his time. She asked if there were any questions or comments.



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Ms. Brown asked if the NPGS plan will get funding to do what's implemented in the plan? Dr. McFerson stated that change can only happen if the plan is funded with more money. There needs to be a focus on utilization and the impact of the collections.

Dr. Bajwa asked if this report talks about policy barriers for international partnerships? Dr. McFerson stated the plan discusses the technical details of how to do a better job of distributing and deploying genetic resources for the benefit of the world.

Dr. Harris asked how is the NGPS plan defining "Empower curators"? Dr. McFerson stated that the NGRAC wants curators who oversee collections to be empowered to begin the opportunity, responsibility, and accountability to develop action plans.

Dr. Harris also asked how can you improve engagement with the tribal communities? Dr. McFerson stated that the NGRAC has a tribal document that they're working on that will provide some guidance to the NGPS Plan and the genetic resources program that deals with livestock, native species, pollinators, and forest species. The NGRAC is collaborating with representatives from the tribal community on further communications.

Dr. Schuchardt stated she's interested in attracting post-secondary and graduate students to be plant genesis students. Dr. McFerson stated the NGRAC is focusing on attracting kindergarten through 12th grades and undergraduate and postgraduate levels for training in genetic analysis.

Ms. Garcia Polanco asked if Dr. McFerson can talk about the stakeholder engagement process? Dr. McFerson stated that it's the responsibility of individual curators to reach out to engage stakeholders across the board.

Ms. Garica Polanco stated the NGRACS's nine recommendations are very important. She thanked Dr. McFerson for his presentation.

DFO Lewis asked if there were any more questions or comments. There were none. She went over the process of how the NAREEE Advisory Board, the Committees, and Subcommittees go through the process of submitting their work products from start to finish.



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III. Old Business

Dr. Jefferson-Moore, Dr. Ferruzzi, DFO Lewis, and Ms. Simmons discussed the status of the following NAREEE Work Products:

Diversity & Inclusivity Recommendations

Status: Board approved 9/22

Pipeline Step: Sent to OSEC for response April 2024 - DFO Lewis and Dr. Jefferson-Moore

Ag Climate Adaptation Report (FY22/23 R&A)

Status: Board approved 6/23

Pipeline Step:

Sent to OSEC for response March 2024 - DFO Lewis and Dr. Jefferson-Moore

CDS FY24 ECDRE feedback

Status: Board approved and sent to NIFA 12/23

Pipeline Step: OSEC acknowledged 4/24 – DFO Lewis

Precision Nutrition (FY23/24 R&A)

Status: Committee drafting report

Pipeline Step: Project Update - Dr. Mario Ferruzzi

Pollinator Subcommittee

Status: Initiated 1/24

Pipeline Step: Initial meeting summary – Michele Simmons

There was a discussion about the June In-Person Meeting. Ms. Simmons will be in contact with all the Board members concerning their flight arrangements and additional logistics details.

IV. Wrap-Up/Adjourn

The next meeting will be **July 2, 2024, from 12 noon - 1 pm ET.**

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. ET.